

January 27, 2006

North Dakota Prevention Partnership Providers and
North Dakota Local Public Health Units

Dear Provider:

Immunizations are one of the best ways to keep North Dakota's children healthy. The North Dakota Immunization Program appreciates the hard work that you do to keep up with the ever changing world of immunizations. In 2005, new vaccines were licensed and became routinely recommended for children, but without an increase in federal funding, the North Dakota Immunization Program was unable to continue to provide all routinely recommended immunizations to all children living in North Dakota.

The Immunization Program began the hard work of searching for additional funds to help continue to maintain the very important universal immunization program. After many conference calls and discussions with the State Health Officer and the Deputy State Health Officer, it became clear that our only option was to seek funding from the largest health insurance company in North Dakota, i.e., Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND).

In December 2005, an agreement between the North Dakota Department of Health and BCBSND was reached. BCBSND has agreed to provide funding to the NDDoH for vaccine purchases. This will help to maintain our universal vaccine purchase status. The NDDoH Immunization Program will continue to provide the vaccines to all enrolled providers in 2006. We hope the process will not change from the past. We will purchase the vaccines and continue to ship them directly to public and private providers.

There are a few things that you should understand about the agreement with BCBSND:

1. BCBSND will only provide funding for children who are currently enrolled as a BCBSND member.
2. Funding will be provided to the state, based on cost per dose of vaccine given. Funding will not be provided up front. BCBSND will reimburse the state monthly for the cost of vaccine given in the previous month. If vaccines are not given or not documented, then the NDDoH will not receive payment.

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3. Each vaccine dose given by the provider will need to be documented in the state immunization registry. Along with doses given, the name of the insurance company and policy number will need to be documented for all children with health insurance.
4. In the future as data becomes available, other insurance companies will be asked to participate in the vaccine purchase program.

The NDDoH is asking for your help and your support in keeping North Dakota a universal state. Use of the immunization registry will be critical in order for the Immunization Program to receive adequate funding to provide vaccines without delay to the child. We are in the process of updating our immunization registry to collect insurance information for all children and adults. When this is completed, instructions will be sent to all providers and training will be initiated with all clinics. We need all providers to participate in the program. Even if one clinic fails to enter the data needed for reimbursement, it could impact the entire program.

Please contact me at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378 if you have any questions or concerns about the Immunization Program.

Sincerely,

Heather Weaver, RN
Immunization Program Manager

cc: Dr. Terry Dwelle, State Health Officer
Arvy Smith, Deputy State Health Officer
Dr. Craig Lambrecht, State Medical Director
Kirby Kruger, Director, Division of Disease Control
Dr. Jon Rice, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota